



Department
for Education

GCE AS and A level subject content for dance

Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.
2. It provides the framework within which the awarding organisations create the detail of the specification. As long as the assessment objectives are met, including the specified weightings, and the subject content is covered, awarding organisations may increase the depth and breadth within the specified knowledge, skills and understanding to support effective teaching and ensure valid and reliable assessment.
3. The AS and A level specifications in dance will cultivate creativity in the student by allowing for individual enquiry within the areas of performance, choreography and critical engagement of own work and that of professional repertoire.

Aims and objectives

4. AS and A level specifications in dance must encourage students to:
 - develop knowledge, understanding and experience of performance, choreography and appreciation of dance as an art form. This will be achieved through exploring and making connections between theory and practice, critically engaging in the analysis of own work and that of professional repertoire, leading to a holistic approach to the study of the subject
 - develop the necessary skills as a performer through the areas of technical training and performance development
 - develop the necessary skills as a choreographer through further experimentation and application of choreographic and structuring devices
 - develop the necessary skills to engage in critical enquiry about the art form through the areas of written communication, reflection, analysis and evaluation
 - develop the necessary awareness of safe practice
 - extend their artistic and historical knowledge of dance in the wider cultural context
 - develop particular strengths, skills and interests which will encourage life-long learning, equip students for study in higher education and provide access to future careers in dance
 - develop a range of skills relating to problem solving, organisation, team work and leadership

Subject content

5. This section sets out the full range of content for AS and A level specifications in dance.

6. AS and A level specifications in dance should build on the requirements for dance in earlier key stages including the skills, knowledge and understanding established at key stage 4 and GCSE qualifications.

7. Where different knowledge, understanding and/or skills are required to ensure students studying at A level go into greater depth and/or breadth than AS, this is specified.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

8. AS and A level specifications in dance must require students to develop, demonstrate and articulate practical and theoretical knowledge, understanding and experience of:

- technical and performance skills
- the process and art of choreography
- safe practice
- the interrelationship between the creation, the presentation and the viewing/appreciation of dance works
- the development of dance placed within an artistic and cultural context
- professional dance works and the significance of these works
- subject specific terminology and its use

9. The knowledge, understanding and skills required at AS and A level in dance are developed and demonstrated within the areas of performance, choreography and critical engagement of own work and that of professional repertoire located within specific areas of study.

10. Areas of study must provide students with the opportunity to investigate the key changes in the development of dance linked to a genre(s) and allow students to demonstrate contextual understanding through written communication and performance. An area of study might be, for example, a period of time, style, company or artistic movement.

11. At AS level investigation of two areas of study will be required.

12. At A level an in-depth investigation and contextual understanding of two specific practitioners within two areas of study will be required.

Performance

13. Have knowledge and understanding of:

- physical skills and technical principles, including correct alignment, flexion, extension, rotation, whole body participation and/or isolation, transference of weight, locomotion, elevation, balance, flexibility, strength, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, agility, neuromuscular coordination and kinaesthetic awareness
- interpretative skills in order to communicate the dance idea in a clear and considered manner, including projection, focus, expression, emphasis, musicality and an awareness of style
- the skills required by an individual both as a soloist and within an ensemble, including spatial awareness, timing, sensitivity and focus with other dancers

- safe practice, including an awareness of correct alignment, technical accuracy when dancing, appropriate dancewear and presentation of self, and a healthy approach to training, rehearsal and the lifestyle of a dancer

14. Through application of embodied knowledge and understanding demonstrate the ability to:

AS level

- develop and apply physical, technical, interpretative and performance skills to practical presentation through both a duet/trio which investigates characteristics of style within a genre(s) and a solo performance of own choreography.
- develop and apply safe practice in performance skills and practical presentation

A level

- perform a solo based on a specific practitioner demonstrating embodied knowledge of the practitioner's movement/choreographic style. This will link to analytical exploration and understanding gained from theoretical investigation within one of the two areas of study
- develop and apply skills as part of an ensemble, through a quartet performance, which link practical experience with critical investigation and appreciation of one of the two areas of study
- develop the artistic intention of the dance idea(s) in communication with other dancers
- apply and develop safe practice in performance skills and practical presentation

Choreography

15. Have knowledge and understanding of:

- choreographic process, including:
 - research and experimentation, including studio and non-studio investigation
 - selection of appropriate constituent features in relation to research and experimentation, including action, dynamic and spatial elements, dancers, aural setting and physical setting
 - manipulation of the movement components through the use of a variety of choreographic devices
- use of a range of choreographic structures
- professional choreographic approaches, including historical and current practice

16. Through application of knowledge and understanding demonstrate the ability to:

AS level

- experiment, develop ideas, craft and structure dance material, applying knowledge and understanding of choreographic process and approaches through the presentation of a solo dance

A level

- experiment, develop ideas, craft and structure dance material, applying knowledge and understanding of choreographic process and approaches through the presentation of a group dance consisting of three, four or five dancers
- develop the artistic intention of the dance idea(s) in communication with other dancers

Critical engagement

17. Have knowledge and understanding of:

- the interrelationship between the creation, the presentation and the viewing/appreciation of dance works
- the development of dance placed within the artistic and cultural context
- professional dance works, including the:
 - significance of the character of each dance, its subject matter and treatment
 - form of each dance and its effectiveness in communicating the subject matter
 - constituent features of each dance including movement components, dancers, physical and aural setting and the relevance of these features in embodying the subject matter
- professional choreographers, including the:
 - technique and style of the choreographer
 - influences affecting the choreographer's development
 - contribution of the choreographer to the development of dance within the artistic and cultural context
- subject specific terminology and its use

18. Through application of knowledge and understanding demonstrate the ability to:

AS level

- analyse, interpret, reflect on and evaluate the performance, choreographic process and outcome relating to own practice through written communication
- analyse, interpret, reflect on and evaluate the performance and choreographic experience through written communication
- comment critically on the development of dance placed within the artistic and cultural context through the study of two areas of study
- develop the understanding and insight appropriate to dance study which will inform clear, succinct written communication and use specialist vocabulary appropriately

A level

- analyse, reflect on and evaluate the performance and choreographic experience, including that of professional repertoire, through written communication
- develop an in-depth critical appreciation of two specific works linked to two different areas of study

- develop an in-depth critical appreciation of two specific choreographers linked to two different areas of study
- develop an in-depth critical appreciation of the artistic and cultural context of each set work linked to an area of study - in relation to its content, the choreographer and other works by the choreographer
- extended writing skills in order to present responses which are clear, coherent, perceptive and use specialist vocabulary appropriately

19. All AS and A level specifications should include synoptic assessment drawing on all assessment objectives.

20. Synoptic assessment of AS and A level dance should require students to:

- develop a broad and deep understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification as a whole
- demonstrate their understanding of the relationships between theory and practice and the ways in which dancers and choreographers make and implement artistic decisions

© Crown copyright 2015

Reference: DFE-00692-2014